

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the final action dated August 3, 2006. In the final action, the Examiner indicated that dependent claims 3, 6, 34, and 56 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In this Amendment, Applicant has merely added the subject matter of claims 3, 34, and 56 into their respective base claims along with any intervening subject matter, and rewritten claim 6 in independent form. Accordingly, the Amendment should be entered in due course.

Claims 1-97 were pending in the application. In the final action, claims 8-30, 36-51, 53 and 58-95 were allowed, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 31-33, 35, 52, 54, 55, 57, 96 and 97 were rejected, and claims 3, 6, 34 and 56 were objected to. In this Amendment, claims 3, 32, 34, 54, 56, 96, and 97 have been canceled, and claims 1, 2, 31, 33, 35, 52, and 55 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 31, 33, 35, 52, 55, and 57 thus remain for consideration.

Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance and requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 31-33, 35, 96 and 97 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Masui et al. (US Patent No. 6,393,013).

Claims 52, 54, 55, and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Masui in view of Kinnunen et al. (US Patent No. 6,545,995).

Claims 3, 6, 34, and 56 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner indicated that dependent claims 3, 6, 34, and 56 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has amended the application to include the subject matter of claims 3, 34, and 56, in their respective base claims (claims 1, 31, and 52) along with any intervening subject matter. Also, Applicant has rewritten claim 6 in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claims 1, 6, 31, and 52 are in condition for allowance, requests that the rejections of claims 1, 31, and 52 be withdrawn, and requests that the objection to claim 6 be withdrawn.

Further, since dependent claims inherit the limitations of their respective base claims, Applicant submits that dependent claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 32, 33, 35, 55, and 57 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 31, and 52.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000.

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

Application No.: 09/762,424

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.3-723

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

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Respectfully submitted,

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